/409 cont./

325 [237] put into the mold. The crucible remains open, and a piece of stag's horn is placed over the opening; it burns and, according to the Meau, is supposed to make the molten metal white and homogeneous. The crucible thus filled is now solidly encased in charcoal, and the bellows are set in motion. Soon the metal begins to melt. Some tobacco is sprinkled over the molten silver in order to prevent oxidation. The film of tobacco and ashes which forms on the silver is blown away with a small tube, and the molten, pure silver is poured into a bar-shaped mold. Before further use the silver bar thus produced is heated slightly and then shaped with a hammer. The [824] finished products are ground with stones and finally boiled and polished with the juice of lemons or other wild, acid plants. In certain instances, ornaments are cut out, and, to be sure, [413] for this the chisel is used, whereas files are unknown. Strangely [171] enough, the Meau in Thailand in contrast to the other mountain peoples of Farther India, are not familiar with any chased work.

/410/ Copper and brass, usually from broken vessels that [177] came from China, undergo a process similar to that used for [439] silver. Both metals are procured directly or indirectly from China, as is lead, which is traded in slabs five centimeters thick and ten centimeters wide.

The iron purchased as bar-iron is used for the manufacture of weapons, knives, tools, and the springs for the gunlocks. For this purpose, the iron is hardened by hammers. Wire- [414] drawing is unknown, and the Meau do not produce any nails or screws. Buttons, ornaments, and decorations on knives and [531] guns are made out of silver, the magic rings (see the chapter, [301] "Religion and Magic," the section, 'Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens") out of copper, and finally the metal parts of mouth organs out of brass, whereas lead is used exclusively for the manufacture of bullets. The Meau do not make metal alloys from the metals used by them, and even [323] clay forms for casting are unknown, since pottery is unknown.

/424 cont./

437 There are no articles that can only be bought with money
439 or with a specific barter commodity. If a person does not have any /425/ silver, he is free to give opium, game, or field produce in payment instead, just as he may buy silver, that is, coins, by means of such articles (see the chapter, "Law and the Administration of Justice," the section, "Property Law").

439 The Meau do not hold any markets of their own in northern
[443] Thailand and do not visit, in contrast to the Meau settled in
[184] Indochina, the markets of the Lao and Schan /Shan/ living in the valleys. Occasionally, to be sure, Lao traders appear among the Meau with their principal article of trade, salt, but usually the Meau undertake the journey in order to acquire the precious product from a Lao in the valley below or occasionally visit the Yau /Yao/ villages in order to buy silver ornaments, since the Yau enjoy a certain reputation as skilled silversmiths.

[184] As a result of closer contact with the Chinese and
439 Annamese, trade seems to be more highly developed among
114 the Meau in Indochina. Concerning this, Lajonquière (1)

1. II, p. 311.

writes: "They produce almost everything that is needed for their subsistence, but without getting any other advantage from it." Abadie (2), too, confirms this statement. Lajonquière con-

2. Page 161.

[273] tinues: "Nevertheless, a few distill alcohol from maize and
[325] sago for the valley dwellers. Others produce spades and plow-
[326] shares from the raw iron that they buy in the markets, and
[323] finally others make pottery. The manufacture of guns, which was formerly current among them, is gradually disappearing through the ease of importation."

/425 cont./

439 These observations are especially interesting because I [114] found exactly the opposite among the Meau in northern Thailand: they produce their guns themselves, but have no [326] knowledge of pottery!

[323] The author continues his observations with a desctiption [184] of the trade: "Trade is restricted to a locality and limited to bartering for a few things that are not part of their subsistence, namely, to certain luxury items, such as ornaments, colored silk, and ribbons. We have already mentioned that they are now beginning to buy even fabrics of European origin. In the region of Lao-Chay, a sector of Than-Thuy, they carry on a [314] special trade in wood for the making of coffins. These are fossilized woods (usually the tree of life, note by Dr. B.) which were buried by earthquakes and which petrified, a property that makes them sought by the Chinese, who like to bury their dead in such wood. The /426/ Meau of this region dig up these [314] woods, cut them into thick planks, and drag these heavy loads through forests and gorges in order to sell them on the 'T'ou-se-meo' of Mung-Tung."

At another place (1), Lajonquière comes back to the

1. II, p. 309.

silk of foreign origin previously mentioned by him: "All [596] clothing is made exclusively within the family. They procure [294] from the outside only the colored silk for the embroideries and the colorful bands which fops are beginning to add to their attire... [286] The custom of buying cotton goods on the market or among the natives who produce it is spreading more and more, for the weaving of hemp is difficult and laborious." We find this observation, too, confirmed by Abadie (2).

2. Page 161.